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Student newspaper policy headed for vote

By Phil Carson

After a well-attended public hearing on Jan. 15 at Wasson High School to discuss a draft of its policy on student publications, the District 11 board of education has scheduled that policy for a possible vote on Jan. 29.

The existing policy was called into question by Will Perkins, a Colorado Springs car dealer and leader of Colorado for Family Values, a group which sponsored Colorado's infamous Amendment Two—an ultimately failed attempt to strip civil rights protections from homosexuals.

Perkins objected to an article in the Palmer High School student newspaper on Oct. 24, 1996 that examined gay teens' lives and an editorial in favor of same-sex marriages.

Though the Jan. 15 public hearing was provided for discussion of the student publications policy and its revisions, perhaps half the large crowd of about 600 people in attendance instead loosely addressed student morality.

Colorado for Family Values representatives and numerous Rockrimmon church members took advantage of the public hearing to push a wholly separate policy that ostensibly addressed student morality.

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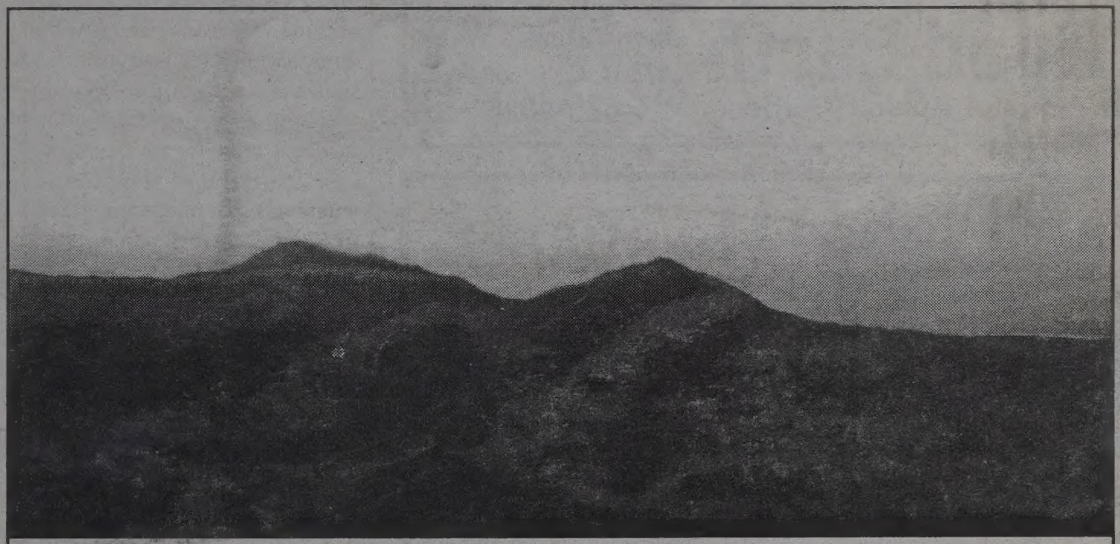

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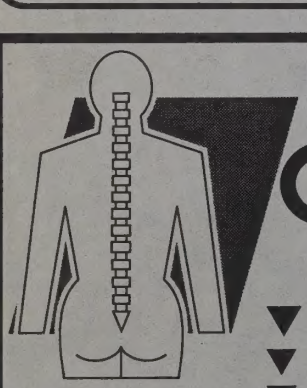

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Student newspapers...

Continued from page 1

That suggested policy reads: "Enact a policy for every aspect of school life which discourages experimentation with any kind of promiscuous sexual activity, promotes abstinence and affirms traditional marriage."

These groups have mounted a postcard campaign and forwarded their policy to the D-11 board for consideration, over the objections of many parents who think that muddies the water over students' rights to free speech.

Prior to the postcard blitz that sent more than a thousand cards to D-11 administrators, letters in favor of student press freedoms formed the majority of public comment on the issue.

Citizens Project, a local group that focuses on church-state separation, has gone on record that the CFV proposal provides the means for censorship and religious intrusion into public schools.

A draft version of the policy, now outdated, had appeared to provide for prior restraint — a required preview of a student publication by administrators or teachers prior to distribution — until the district added a qualification: "The principal or designee shall approve distribution unless such publication violates

Amendment 16 c over, but hurdles

A federal judge has ruled against a lawsuit brought by opponents of voter-approved Amendment 16 and theoretically cleared the way for the amendment's implementation.

Putting the amendment into action could affect the fate of Section 16, a 640-acre parcel of open space on Colorado Spring's southwest flank.

One provision of Amendment 16 is a mandated set-aside of ten percent of the three million acres managed by the state land board. Those 300,000 acres would have to be preserved as open space.

But, according to one local state legislator, the amendment's implementation still faces hurdles.

Amendment 16 reorganizes the state land board from three paid members to five unpaid members appointed by Democratic Governor Roy Romer. New members must be confirmed by the Republican state senate.

"It looks like the governor can go ahead and appoint a new board," said Rep. Marcy Morrison, R-Manitou Springs. "There will be a battle, however, probably over gubernatorial appointments. All in all though it looks like the courts have said it's okay."

Colorado voters approved Amendment 16 on Nov. 5, 1996. Before it could be implemented, however, former state Senator Jim

Akron, and his, Save

"I wanted to tell the story differently than Oliver Stone."